

FEW EARLY MARRIAGES; EACH YEAR SHOWS AGE JUMP

Average for Men Exceeds 30 in 1921 and Was 27 1-5 Thirteen Years Ago, While That for Women Is Nearly 26, as Against 22 4-5—Even Slacker Weddings Failed to Lower the Figures—Increasing Independence of Women Cited as One Cause, Inability of Young Men to Earn Enough Another—Unemployment Fails to Check Number

By MARTHA COMAN.

THE average man throws in his lot with the bachelors soon after he has turned 30. The average woman escapes spinsterhood to-day at the age of nearly 26. In other words, newly wedded couples are not as young as they used to be. The age at which men and women stand before a representative of the church or the City Clerk and promise to take each other "for better, for worse" and abide by the consequences has advanced.

Official figures that go back to the time when the city started to keep a record of the age of every man and every woman applying for a marriage license show that the limit of bachelorhood and maidenhood has advanced by regular steps.

To ascertain the average age at which a man and a woman marry, official statistics not providing this information, the records of the Marriage License Bureau, the first date of which is January, 1908, were carefully examined. The ages of 300 men and the 300 women to whom they were joined in matrimony were taken, and from these figures an average was struck. This average, representing the marrying age thirteen years ago, is 27 1-5 years for the men and 22 4-5 for the women.

Figures taken from the official records for January, 1911, ten years ago, show a decided advance in the average. As in the first instance, the ages of 300 men and the ages of the women to whom they were married were used in arriving at the average, which is 28 1/2 for men and 24 1-2 for women.

Average Age Continues to Advance Even in Period of Military Draft

Between 1911 and the present year came the draft, which gave an added incentive to marrying. The figures from the official books for the two most important periods of the draft, August, 1917, when the first Governmental selection of men to bear arms in the world war was made, and in January, 1918, when the second call came, are interesting. They do not reduce the average, as one might expect from the great number of boys of nineteen, twenty and twenty-one who married in those periods. On the contrary, they show that the age of bachelorhood and spinsterhood continued to advance, though it slowed down ever so little. The number of young girls and young men marrying then was offset, so far as the average is concerned, by an unusual group of applicants in the fifties or the sixties.

There is no accounting for this. Even the City Clerk himself had no explanation, although he finally suggested that a man past sixty married a woman near his own age—and sometimes she was a year or two older—to provide for her future in case anything serious happened to this country during the war.

Average Age in Present Year Is

30 1-3 for Men and 25 3-4 for Women

The average age of 300 men who were married in January, 1921, is 30 1-3 years and of the women they married is 25 3-4.

Since 1908, the year for which first official figures were obtainable, to 1921 the average marrying age has advanced for the man from 27 1-5 to 30 1-3 and for the woman from 22 4-5 to 25 3-4.

In thirteen years the marrying age for men has advanced 32 1-5 years and for women 29 1-5 years. In ten years it has advanced 15 1-2 years for men and 15 1-2 years for women.

There were 78,640 marriage licenses issued in the five boroughs last year. Of these 43,324 were issued in Manhattan. The number in Brooklyn was about half this. The number of matrimonial knots tied by the City Clerk in 1920 was 21,992 for the five boroughs. Manhattan Borough's clerk performed 15,436 of these civil ceremonies.

Chief Clerk Edward W. Hart of the Marriage License Bureau said that the average number of marriage licenses issued in January last year, which broke the record, except during the draft, was almost 400 a day. The general average for a busy day is 200.

In one day's records examined there were 156 bridegrooms under 30 and fifty-eight over 30. One hundred and twenty-three brides were under 25 and ninety-one were 25 or over.

Of 300 bridegrooms that applied for licenses in August, 1918, during the second draft, 216 were 30 or under, and of their 300 brides 233 were 25 or under. Thirty-one of the bridegrooms were from 19 to 21 and seventy-one of the brides were under 20. Compare this number of early marriages with those of ten years before the draft. As against the seventy-one brides of 20 or under in 1918 there were eighty-six of the same age in 1908. Also in this list there was one bride of 16, there were three of 17 and five of 18 years of age. There were twenty bridegrooms from 19 to 21 years of age in 1908.

During the draft there were seven bridegrooms over 55, one of them 66, and there was one bride of 69, while there were two of 52 years of age and two others in the fifties. If the average age of the bridegroom has advanced by three and two-fifths years and of the bride by nearly three years in the last thirteen years, how is this to be accounted for? The advance, as the records show, has been steady. It has not jumped higher some years and then fallen below in other years. One must believe from these figures that men and women are postponing marriage more and more. What is the explanation?

Representative persons were asked to express their views on an indisputable fact as presented by the official figures. Michael J. Cruise, acting City Clerk and First Deputy, who may be considered at present the greatest marrying person in the country, confessed that he could not account for the delay in approaching the matrimonial altar. Mr. Cruise paused for breath during one of his busiest splicing days and glanced over

Magistrate Jean Norris, who believes the increasing independence of women is raising the marriage age.



PHOTO BY KEYSTONE APN CO.

the table of averages prepared from the city's records.

"From my observation of the couples who come here to be married," said he, "I should say that the majority of the men are about 24 and about 35 and the girls about 20 and 30." commented the First Deputy City Clerk. "There seem to be fewer men between those ages getting married these days. Maybe they want to see a little bit of life before they tie up."

"The girls are very young, taking them as a whole. We have any number of them 18, 19 and 20. But then you must remember that a woman sometimes cheats a little about her age. I don't want to flatter myself, but I feel that I am pretty good at guessing ages."

"Yesterday we had a 'girl' of 66 who married a man of 65. That's unusual, of course, and I can see how such ages would run the average up a good deal. But if you were here a few days you would think that ever so many more girls of 19 or 20 were marrying young men of 24 or 25 than of any other age. We do have numbers of men of 35 marrying women of 30 or over."

The acting City Clerk said that he did not think unemployment had anything to do with not marrying, because this year, in which thousands of men and women have been out of work, has started off as a banner marrying year.

Before hastening back to a room full of waiting brides and bridegrooms the First Deputy gave some interesting figures from his department. It takes about two minutes to perform the service in the little chapel on the floor above the Marriage License Bureau. About one-third of the marriages for which applications for certificates are made are performed in the city's chapel.

Fridays and the thirteenth of the month are comparatively dull days for this ceremony. A big day brings seventy couples to the altar and the average day about fifty. Sometimes, when there is a specially large crowd of anxious bridegrooms and brides waiting in the anteroom and the morning has been a strain on Mr. Cruise's voice, he sends an S. O. S. to the Brooklyn Deputy or the Richmond Borough Deputy and gives his vocal cords a little rest while one of these marrying neighbors conducts the solemn rites.

Each Day Has Its Own

Classification of Couples

On Mondays from 25 to 30 per cent. of the applicants for licenses are from out of town, many of them coming from Pennsylvania, Mr. Cruise said. He calls it his travelers' day. Tuesday the New York men and women predominate, and Wednesday is the favorite day for young couples. Thursday is Italy's day at the bridal altar, and Friday, which is considered unlucky by white brides, is, strangely enough, not looked upon with superstition by the negroes, who come to have the knot tied by the city official. Saturday, which is a half day in this chapel, is unusually busy. Mr. Cruise calls it a cosmopolitan day, as it seems to have no special characteristic as to nationality.

All kinds and conditions apply for certificates and then go up stairs, where the acting City Clerk presides, to get the ceremony over civilly, and afterward perhaps have the marriage performed by a priest or pastor.

Magistrate Jean Norris, who is alternating between the Women's Court in Jefferson Market and the Domestic Relations Court in West Fifty-seventh street, advanced the opinion that men and women were marrying at an older age now because women have become economically independent.

Sees No Necessity These Days

For Marrying to Get a Home

"I have not given the subject any careful thought," said Miss Norris, who was seen after court had adjourned. She still wore her judicial gown and was seated in the Judge's private office adjoining the Women's Court up stairs. "It is no longer important or even necessary for women to marry for a home. Practically every woman can be self-supporting these days. Many who are the daughters of wealthy parents earn their living. This has made a tremendous difference to women. I should say that the average age at which men and women marry has advanced in a ratio with the increasing number of women who have become economically independent."

"This economic independence of women reacts on the men. They delay marrying because they cannot get the women they want at an earlier age or because they like

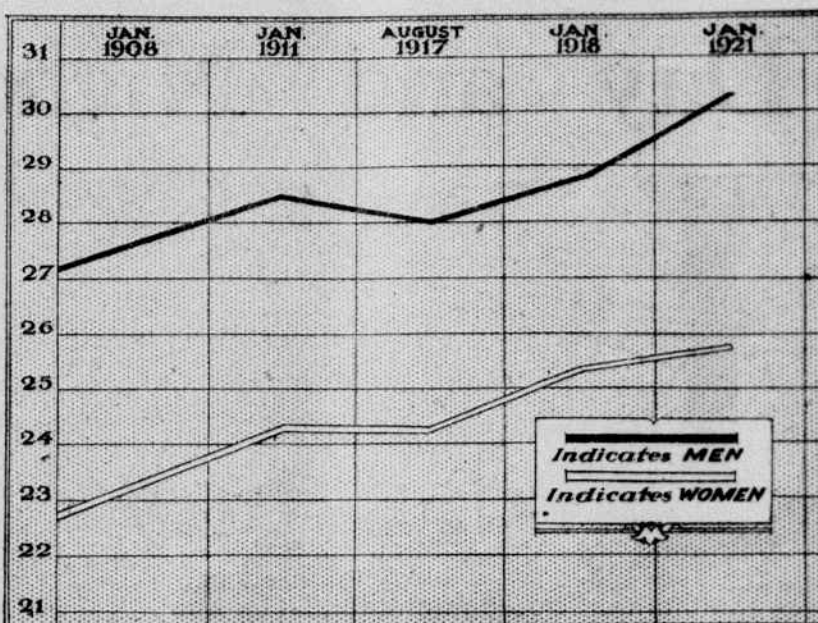


CHART SHOWING INCREASE IN MARRYING AGES.

to see life before settling down. This arrangement keeps the relative age about the same, I should say. Women who wait until they are 25 to marry naturally marry men comparatively near their own age. As it

happens, this age is about 30, according to the figures.

"Since I have been at the Domestic Relations Court I have seen the greatest display of bitterness, particularly by the younger

Chasing Rum-Runners Along the Canadian Border

Continued from Preceding Page.

Slowly it began turning over. Our car did not respond to the brakes, as the outlaw's had, and we rammed the already capsizing prize. The bootlegger jumped for it, took to the middle of the road and stuck his hands in the air.

There was a crash and a grinding. A magnificent aroma pervaded the atmosphere. "Well," soliloquized the Sheriff as he surveyed the bootlegger, "all it cost you was a \$5,000 car and forty cases of hooch, which must have stood you \$1,000 in Canada. Pretty soft for you, kid."

"I should worry," returned the outlaw. "It wasn't my car and not my sixteen hundred. The guy puttin' up for that cargo ain't broke yet. What are you goin' to do with me?"

"Oh, you'll get a hearing before the Commissioner," interrupted the customs man. "That means \$1,000 bond, and you'll be fined a couple of hundred in court later on."

"We'll make a night of it by lookin' over Oscar Brown's place at Owl's Head," suggested the other customs man.

So back to Malone and on for six miles to Owl's Head. It was breaking day and there was activity around Oscar's house.

We tried the barn first.

"What d'ye want?" shrieked an old chap, who was raking straw with a pitchfork.

"Where's Oscar?"

"Bed, I expect. What d'ye want, anyhow?"

"Got any booze around, Pap?"

"Booze? My, my, no indeed. I'm a Holy Roller."

"A what?" demanded the customs man.

"Holy Roller. Holy Roller. We don't care nothing about booze. Can't feed cows booze and git milk."

Searching Oscar's Barn

Proves a Fruitful Task

We dug Oscar out of bed and with him searched the barn. Pretty soon we discovered twelve cases of suspicious looking stuff labelled rye whiskey. And later on we came upon a trunk in which there were twelve bottles of good Dewar's Scotch.

"Why didn't you tell us it was here?" demanded the customs man of the old Holy Roller.

"Nobody ever told me nothin' I didn't have to work to git," was the sage reply.

"Where did you get this good Scotch?"

The patriarch cocked his head, closed his left eye and delivered himself of the following wisdom:

"Say, did you ever try gittin' what you go after?"

And that was one night on the border.

There's no telling what may happen after May 1. On that date the Canadian Government takes over the business of distribution of intoxicants. But one bottle may be sold legally to any one person in a day. The case lots business will be outlawed. But we shall see! They're working miracles along the border.

There's no news in the statement that booze is gushing into the United States from Canada all along the border. This story has to do with the New York border and particularly that part of the border stretching from Fort Covington to Rouses Point.

From Fort Covington west, that section of the boundary being the St. Lawrence River, there is less fetch in because it is more difficult, more dangerous and slower to smuggle the stuff across water.

As has been said, there are about fifty roads over which whiskey is smuggled between Rouses Point and Fort Covington. The Government officials admit it. The Franklin and Clinton county officials admit it. Everybody who cares a little bit for truth admits it and in loud unison they demand:

"What of it? How are you going to stop it?"

It is about seventy miles from Rouses Point to Fort Covington. Along that far flung bottle line the United States Government maintains about thirty customs of-

ficers. They admit that about one rum runner in a hundred is captured at or within twenty-five miles south of the border.

And it is their guess that the successful ninety-nine are not molested south of that twenty-five mile line. Volstead agents have come and gone—one as suddenly as the other. Two weeks ago three, assigned to the Malone sector, were dismissed from the service after brief sojourn.

An entirely new brand of outlaw has arisen. The writer was assured by county and Federal agents that the situation is worse to-day than it has been, and that it is growing worse. You arrive in the north country to be regaled with stories that you scoff at. It can't be true? It sounds like the cheap movie serial. It is exaggerated. Town boosters and resort hotel proprietors bewail the sensational stories emanating from the border country. It's bad business. Tourists will be frightened away. Briefly they are anxious to throttle the truth, for the truth of the matter is that the booze smuggling business has developed into one of the most desperate and vicious traffics the East has seen.

There are police records of stories that sound like ravings.

There's the man who two years ago was a railroad station roustabout earning a bare livelihood driving a broken down Ford to the village hotel. He had but one suit of clothing, and that a pair of overalls. In winter he lived by snow shovelling and furnace tending. Three months ago he offered \$150,000 cash for a Lake George hotel. He drives his own Cadillac to-day.

One of the St. Regis Indians was arrested for running hooch from Moores Forks to Lake Placid—from depot to depot.

"How did you get in this business?" he was asked.

"Me?" he replied. "Oh, me, I buy a bottle of whiskey for \$3 and sell him for \$7. Then I buy me two bottles and sell him for double. Pretty quick I have a Ford and I make money pretty fast."

There are a dozen instances of holdups of tourists. It used to be that the highwaymen posed as Volsteaders or State police. They have passed the stage of dissembling now. One instance will illustrate the whole.

Bandits Block the Roads

To Prey on Rum-Runners

A man was driving to Montreal in a big car—the size and type desired for bootlegging. With him was his daughter. Just above Plattsburg late in the afternoon two armed men held up the father and daughter and told them to dismount. They took what money the father had—a matter of \$400—took his name and told him he'd hear from them later. He did. A week later the car was located in Buffalo, almost wrecked and abandoned. Several broken bottles in the luggage carrier told the story. It had been used for bootlegging. It had carried its consignment across the border. It was too risky to keep the car in service. The bandits went out for another.

And maybe they got it.

Bandits have found it profitable to block the road and wait for rum-runners coming south. The rum-runner is dragged off his seat and the holdup men do the rest of the running. It is all clear profit for them. Neither the car nor the booze costs them anything.

All this has bred the gun toting rum-runner and the combinations of smugglers who enjoy independent profits but who have banded together for protection against their less daring and more despicable brothers in outlawry.

Of Volstead men the stories are multitudinous. The chances are that many are quite true.

From a Government official the writer learned the following tale, and this one is altogether typical of the run of them.

Into the Elks home in a border town came a prosperous looking citizen who dis-

played his tooth insignia and his membership card.

"Am in town for two or three days," he explained to a brother Elk. "Could I get a drink?"

"A brother can, I guess," was the reply, and the stranger received and drank his drink.

Having downed the stuff, he pulled back his coat and displayed a Volstead badge.

"Now what do you think of that?" he sneered.

What his host thought and put into words is not to be set down here. He left the stranger in no doubts and was thinking of new ones when the stranger interrupted:

"Oh, sit tight. It's all right. How'd you like to buy a case, or say two cases?"

He had only two cases left, and you're welcome to them at \$100 a case. What do you say to that?"

There was nothing to say except "yes," and the trapped man said it. He had to buy it. He bought it.

Two nights after the raid on the Mary Kelly road and its sequel on Bare Hill we went over into Canada to run the road with Wilson, McMillan, McCaffrey and Bill McNaughton. The situation is different in

Canada. The roads are bad and there are more customs men along the border. Montreal is the great centre of the liquor traffic. There are about 150 licensed dispensers of booze in that town, and there are two good highways running into it from the States. For that reason the triangle of land lying between the American border and the St. Lawrence River, especially that section thereof lying west of the Canadian reach of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, is sown with relay stations. Booze is dispensed there and made in those stations. In almost all instances they are farms.

The tyro runs great risk of not getting what he goes after. You drive your car to the designated farm. The barn door is opened. In you go. You are invited to the house to partake of a sample slug and have a bite to eat. When you return to the barn your car is packed with the required number of bottles or cases. The gasoline tank has been filled and you're oil supply replenished. You are fit for the long drive. It's a little short of 450 miles from Fort Covington or Chateaugay, N. Y., to Manhattan. You can get your load of booze ten miles inside Canada or even less.

Anyway you have paid \$40 a case for a medium brand of youthful Scotch or \$90 for honest stuff (stuff that is becoming rarer and rarer by the way). You are just as likely as not to arrive in the States with a cargo of synthetic stuff so freshly labelled that the paste thereon is not yet dry. If you know the game they do not attempt fraud, or if you are a member of a certain ring or clique you are treated fairly. However, the Canadian farmer is not any more angelic than his American brother. It's a safe game. The buncoed one has no comeback. There's no one upon whose official shoulder he may weep.

We met in Wilson's offices in the Canadian customs office north of Trout River. McMillan was nursing a bruised fist.

"You're late," grinned Wilson. "McMillan here's just after administering a grand beating to a State policeman. Yep, a New York State policeman. At any rate he wore the badge of one—both of them did. Yes, there were two. You tell 'em Mac."

But McMillan declined. He's a whale of a man, about 60 years old. Every so often he hares forth into the habitat of the toughest citizen in his bailiwick and does out to that citizen a tremendous walloping. The moral effect is wonderful. Thereafter nobody seeks to take advantage of old Mac's soaring years. He holds forth officially at Dundee, Quebec, just across the border from Fort Covington.

"Have it your own way, then," went on Wilson. "McNaughton and McMillan there were out having a look at Napoleon Bastian's farm when along comes a big fellow,

every day looking for a job who says that he has had to postpone his wedding until he gets work," said Mr. Jacobs. "One this morning, a man who had been overseas—I think he couldn't have been more than twenty-five—told me that he had intended to get married next week but that it was 'all off' now. That man will get a job, but it will take him some time to save up his money for the wedding, and in the meantime the girl may not want to wait for him and will marry some one else."

"It is heartbreaking to see such numbers of men who were in the service now looking for work. We have them from colonels down to privates. Last week we placed a Colonel who was overseas in a good job and we have found openings for majors."

The Ex-Service Men's Employment Bureau, Inc., makes no charge either to the applicant for the job or to the person or firm desiring an employee. Its offices are donated by a friend and even the telephone service is paid for by contributions. The organization is supported entirely by voluntary offerings. It has the indorsement of the American Legion and other ex-service men's organizations, yet it is not directed in the slightest way by any of these.

The type of man who goes there looking for a job is far above the average. Many of them wore their service raincoats, and all looked neat and clean. Their average age is about 28, Mr. Jacobs said, and many are married. Some of these married men are actually destitute. They are in immediate need of clothing, food or medical attention for themselves or their families, and some interested and kindly friend of the bureau takes it upon herself or himself to see that enough is supplied to tide over the individual or the family.

"If economic conditions do not improve we'll have the marrying age moving further and further along," remarked Mr. Jacobs. "Seeing these needy married men in here would discourage any single man from taking a wife until he has something ahead and a job that he thinks is sure. Lack of jobs is certainly a bar to marriage. You can quote me as saying that it's the biggest one just now."

a Packard, with the two lads on the seat.

"Let's have a look inside," says Mc-

Millan.

"It's useless," replies one of the lads.

"We have nothing."

"Just so," says Mac, "and what's more you have no lights."

"We'll be goin' then," replies the lad, "because we're policemen. See here."

"And the lads display their badges, which Mac reads with the aid of his lamp. Mac is not so willin' that the pair go on, so he

talks a bit, and then sees one of the lads reach for his hip pocket. Old Mac grabs the lad by the neck and lets him have the other fist to the chin, and the lad buckles up. Mac takes the lad's weapon, gives him a few more cuffs and tosses him into the tonneau of the car.

"Now be off to the States and stay there," says Mac to the conscious lad. And that's the last we saw of them, tearin' for the border."

We set forth for Napoleon Bastian's farm in two cars. We had not gone more than a mile when we came abreast of a fine black colt hitched to a light buggy. An enormous man filled the vehicle. It was close to 10 o'clock and the night was black.

"Ain't you afraid bein' on the road with the little mare when the speed boys are tearin' up and down?" yelled Wilson.

"No," replied the horseman. "I'm driving across toward Kensington, where I live. Just bought the colt."

McMillan Sees Something

Queer in the Proceedings

"There's something damned queer about that," grunted McMillan when the sound of the colt's hoofs had died away. "Queer time of night to be drivin' a colt—a new one at that. We'll run over Kensington way after calling on Napoleon."

Napoleon asserted that he was ver' ver' glad to see Meester Veeelsong, but his eyes didn't match his tongue.

"Nice car you had out in the road this morning, Napoleon," said Wilson.

"It belong to my son-in-law," explained Napoleon.

"Almost as nice as those two I noticed there day before yesterday," pursued Wilson.

"Oui; they too are those of the husbands of my other daughters."

"Fine, fine; the girls married well, didn't they?"

"But they are beautiful girls," explained Napoleon with a bow.

"Where's Madame going?" demanded Mc-

Millan, suddenly observing that ampie lady waddling toward the barn via the back path.

"Who can tell?" shrugged Napoleon. "She is a woman of moods."

"Well, we shall have a look," decided Wilson.

Wilson yanked the barn door open, and Madame, having taken care to provide herself with a heavy wagon spoke, took a healthy whack at the official's head. Wilson warded it off with his arm. Napoleon leaped to his wife.

"You fool," he snarled at the enraged lady, and he snatched the spoke.

In the wagon space stood a big Cadillac touring car. In the front seat, heavily sleeping, lay the husband of one of the beautiful daughters. Packed into the car were 480 quarts of whiskey, proclaiming itself by label to be the best product of the Dawson distilleries.

And stored in Napoleon Bastian's hay mows, long since bereft of hay, were 240 cases of various whiskeys—2,880 quarts!

We turned west toward Kensington, after telephoning to five points along the border to be on the lookout for two big Stutz cars that had passed us like demons—no lights burning and horns squawking like scared things.

Near La Farge's Corners we located the black colt and its owner. The latter was